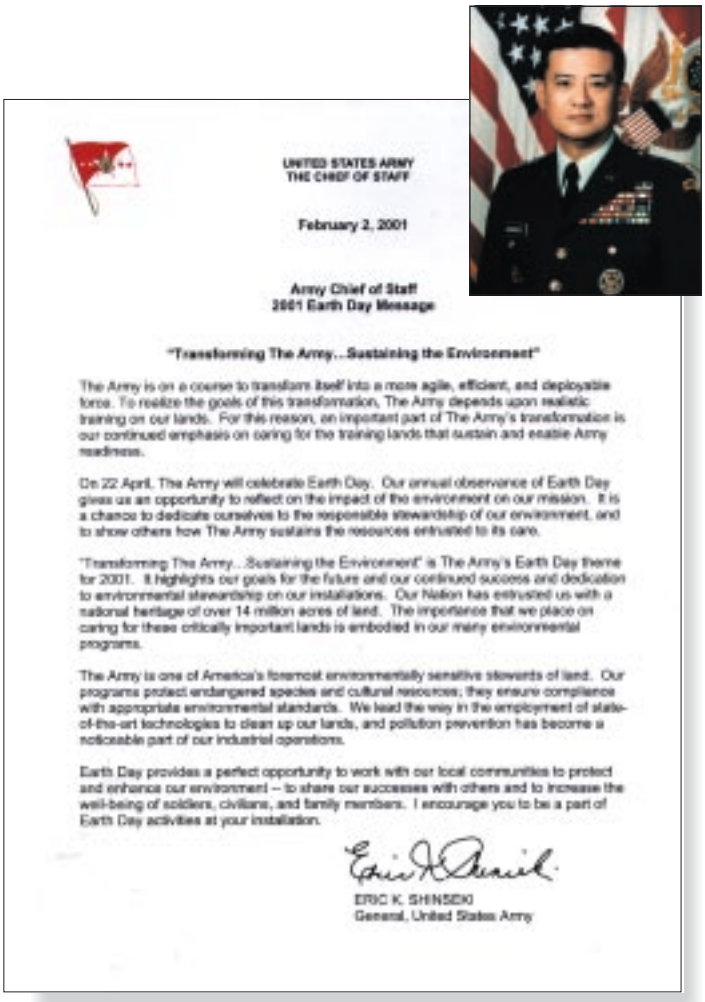
Environmental Front

Compiled by Cynthia Houston



UNITED STATES ARMY
THE CHIEF OF STAFF

February 2, 2001

Army Chief of Staff
2001 Earth Day Message

"Transforming The Army...Sustaining the Environment"

The Army is on a course to transform itself into a more agile, efficient, and deployable force. To realize the goals of this transformation, The Army depends upon realistic training on our lands. For this reason, an important part of The Army's transformation is our continued emphasis on caring for the training lands that sustain and enable Army readiness.

On 22 April, The Army will celebrate Earth Day. Our annual observance of Earth Day gives us an opportunity to reflect on the impact of the environment on our mission. It is a chance to dedicate ourselves to the responsible stewardship of our environment, and to show others how The Army sustains the resources entrusted to its care.

"Transforming The Army...Sustaining the Environment" is The Army's Earth Day theme for 2001. It highlights our goals for the future and our continued success and dedication to environmental stewardship on our installations. Our Nation has entrusted us with a national heritage of over 14 million acres of land. The importance that we place on caring for these critically important lands is embodied in our many environmental programs.

The Army is one of America's foremost environmentally sensitive stewards of land. Our programs protect endangered species and cultural resources; they ensure compliance with appropriate environmental standards. We lead the way in the employment of state-of-the-art technologies to clean up our lands, and pollution prevention has become a noticeable part of our industrial operations.

Earth Day provides a perfect opportunity to work with our local communities to protect and enhance our environment -- to share our successes with others and to increase the well-being of soldiers, civilians, and family members. I encourage you to be a part of Earth Day activities at your installation.

ERIC K. SHINSEKI
General, United States Army

Agency Offers Help in Planning TCAs

THERE are no set patterns or off-the-shelf templates for designing tactical-concealment areas — TCAs require large expanses of maneuver land and present environmental concerns, such as how to prevent erosion.

A new approach to TCAs, created by the U.S. Army Environmental Center at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., and titled "Tactical Concealment Area Planning and Design Guidance," integrates training and environmental requirements to enhance design realism. Simultaneously, it expands training resources, lowers environmental impacts and increases training safety.

The new publication provides procedural guidance for trainers and land managers involved in the planning, design and execution of tactical concealment. It will help its users do three things: Start and carry out a tactical-concealment project; develop realistic, effective and environmentally stable training areas; and provide ideas for using in-house resources.

The concept was field-tested at Camp Bullis and Fort Hood, Texas; Camp Guernsey, Wyo.; and Camp Ripley, Mont. Lessons learned and general design criteria in the guidance come directly from installation experts who work the situations every day.

"The training area at Camp Ripley offered limited maneuverability when training mechanized and armor forces to doctrinal standards," said MAJ Dirk Kloss, an operations officer at the camp.

"To support the training strategy and comply with environmental concerns, we needed to improve and enhance the existing trail systems and stabilize the terrain," he said. "This ultimately improved our maneuverability and prevented large-scale erosion and loss of vegetation, thus minimizing the impact on the terrain and ultimately enhancing readiness."

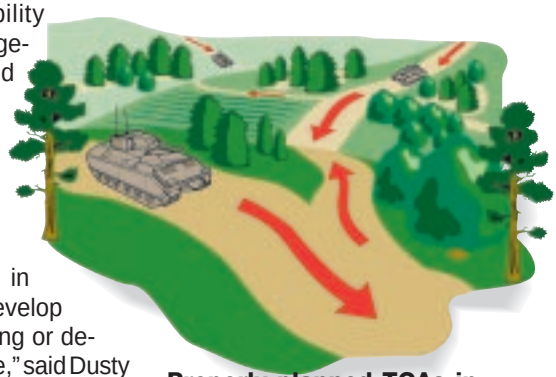
"The trick is in the team you develop before any planning or designing takes place," said Dusty Bruns, Integrated Training Area Management coordinator for Camp Bullis. "Each TCA is an outgrowth of both training and environmental considerations that are brought to the table by specific team members."

Camp Bullis achieved a 70 percent savings per acre by applying many of the guidance document recommendations, "and we've increased our training land use for active and reserve components by over 100 percent," said Dick Strimmel, U.S. Army Medical Command ITAM program manager at Camp Bullis.

A comprehensive, holistic approach to land design that considers an installation's training needs, existing resources, resource conditions and environmental constraints can be applied across the entire training area.

"We must maintain a balance of environmental considerations and training to preserve our precious training ground for the future," said Kloss.

Tactical planners can get a copy of "Tactical Concealment Area Planning and Design Guidance" by sending an e-mail request to **USAECTIC @aec.apgea.army.mil**. A web-based version is available to DENIX account holders at **http://aec.army.mil/prod/usaec/et/conserv/conserv.htm**. — *Kim Michaels, USAEC*



Properly planned TCAs integrate training and environmental requirements to expand training resources, reduce environmental impacts and increase safety.

A Tale of Tanks and Tortoises

CAN tanks and tortoises coexist in peace? Jeanne Jones believes they can, and she's proving it.

Since 1987, the assistant professor of wildlife and fisheries at Mississippi State University has worked with the Mississippi Army National Guard to prepare and carry out long-range ecosystem management plans that monitor protected species. Accompanied by graduate students under her direction, Jones initially worked at Camp Shelby, the Guard's

sprawling 136,000-acre facility near Hattiesburg, known for its tank and artillery training.

"We were initially contacted by Camp Shelby to help with erosion control," Jones said. "More than 80,000 people train at the camp during the summer, and the tanks and other vehicles used in that training tear up a lot of ground," she said. "Come August, they have a lot of bare ground to reclaim."

As a result of the research, seed mixtures of white and crimson clover, hairy vetch and ryegrass are being used to prevent erosion in the camp's training areas. "We put in extensive field testing plots with various plantings," Jones said. In addition to protecting the land, the plantings enhance the habitat for rabbits, deer, wild turkeys and other wildlife.

Working with the U.S. Forest Service and The Nature Conservancy, her teams have established an ecosystem management plan that is helping restore and protect pitcher-plant wetlands, longleaf pine forests and many streams. All are habitats that are safe havens for protected plants and animals.

"Currently, there are 77 state- or federally protected plants and animals that call Camp Shelby home, including the gopher tortoise," Jones said. "One interesting thing we have found is that the frequent fires associated with the camp's artillery firing improve the habitat for some species, including gopher tortoises and pitcher plants."

A bonus of the work for Mississippi's hunters is the improved habitat for deer, wild turkeys and other game birds and animals in the buffer zones that separate the training areas from the surrounding countryside.

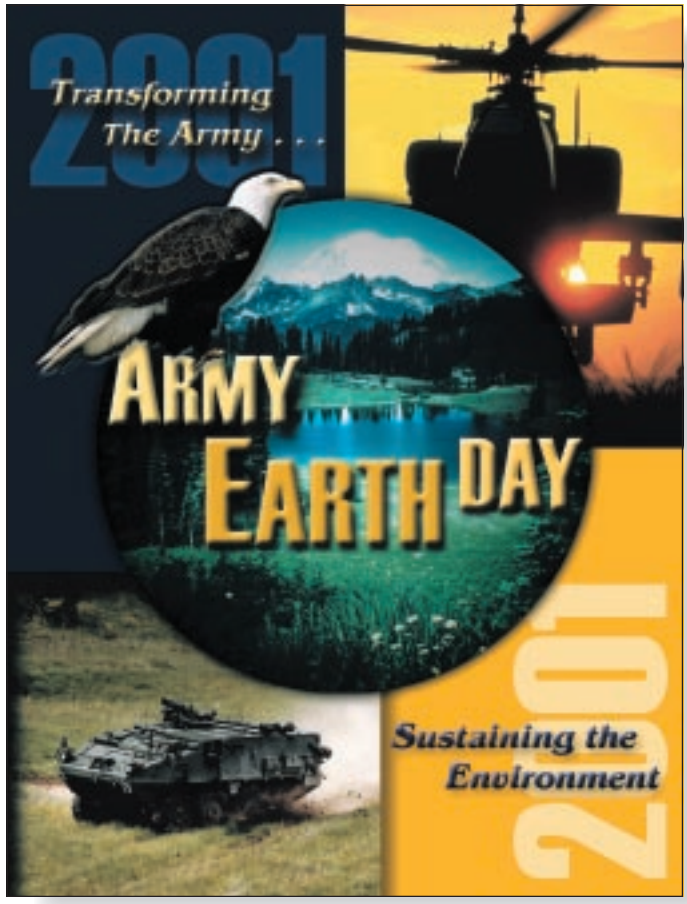
Jones' involvement has helped the military accomplish its training mission while protecting the environment, said LTC Robert Piazza of National Guard headquarters in Jackson.

"Our main objective is to train troops, but we also have to manage natural resources and be good stewards of the land," he said. "That's what we're trying to do through the work with MSU."

Several ecosystem-management projects on Army posts are expected to continue for several years, as MSU scientists help the Army seek the balance between ecosystem management and effective military training operations.

For additional information on the Camp Shelby program, call (662) 325-2219. — *Karen Brasher, MSU*

Copies of the 2001 Earth Day poster are available through USAEC's website at http://aec.army.mil, or via e-mail to Deborah.Elliot @aec.apgea.army.mil.



Army Announces Environmental Awards

THE Pentagon will honor eight Army installations and teams May 2 as winners of the Secretary of the Army Fiscal Year 2000 Environmental Awards.

Army environmental professionals from around the world competed for the awards in natural-resources conservation, cultural-resources management, environmental quality, pollution prevention and environmental restoration. The best advanced to compete with environmental-award winners from the Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Defense Logistics Agency for a Secretary of Defense Environmental Security Award, to be presented at the Pentagon May 3.

Following are the FY 2000 winners in each award category:

Natural Resources Conservation
Installation of more than 10,000 acres: U.S. Army, Alaska.

Cultural Resources Management
Installation: Fort Bliss, Texas.
Team: Cultural Resources Management Program Team, Fort McCoy, Wis.

Environmental Quality
Industrial installation: Lake City Army Ammunition Plant, Mo.
Overseas installation: 409th Base Support Battalion, Grafenwöhr, Germany.

Pollution Prevention
Non-industrial installation: Fort Eustis, Va.
Individual or Team: Pollution Prevention Action Team, Fort Bliss.

Environmental Restoration
Installation: Fort Meade, Md.

For more information on the Secretary of the Army Environmental Awards, contact Cynthia Houston at the U.S. Army Environmental Center, at (410) 436-1270, DSN 584-1270, or via e-mail to **Cynthia.Houston@aec.apgea.army.mil.**

*Please send your contributions or questions to Cynthia Houston, National Outreach Team Leader, U.S. Army Environmental Center, 5179 Hoadley Road, Attn.: SFIM-AEC-PA. Bldg. 4415, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5401, or e-mail **Environmental.Front@aec.apgea.army.mil**. Houston may be reached by phone at (410) 436-1270 or (DSN) 584-1270.*